

Questions and Answers for RFP 160-08-05

- 1) Will there be any data conversion requirements for historical purposes? If so, from which current systems?

A: Some data conversion will be required during Phase 2. Century Code will need to be converted and is currently in an IBM BookMaster format (tag-based DCF) on the mainframe as well as PDF format for Web access. Other historical data may need to be migrated as well and should be identified during Phase 1.

- 2) On page 7, you say "many other computer systems were developed over time to support the entire legislative process". Have all of these systems been defined in the 5 application systems listed on page 8?

A: Although many systems have been developed over time, they all fit into the 5 broad categories listed on page 8. For example, NDLC has developed an Expense Report system for Legislators. That system is included in the Miscellaneous Administrative system category.

- 3) Can you further define the mainframe based print rendering engine?

A: The current printing of bill drafts includes products such as IBM BookMaster, IBM Advanced Function Printing (AFP), and Adobe Distiller. The current printing process will be replaced. Phase 1 activities include gathering requirements and designing a solution. Phase 2 will consist of the implementation of that solution.

- 4) Miscellaneous Administrative applications are primarily in Lotus Notes and these are on the replacement list.

- a. Can these applications be further defined?

A: Lotus Notes applications include Telephone Messaging, Meeting Materials, People/Committees/Meetings, and Expense Reports defined in Section 2.04 of the RFP. Other applications include Conference Committee Scheduling, Fiscal Notes, and a few others.

- b. It is understood they will be integrated into the overall system and, as such, will be written in the proposed language.

A: Correct. All Lotus Notes based applications are expected to be replaced. Phase 1 activities include gathering requirements and designing a solution. Phase 2 will consist of the implementation of that solution.

- 5) Administrative Code and Budget Status are not to be replaced but must be integrated into the new applications.

- a. What database is currently used with these applications?

A: Administrative Code utilizes the Microsoft Windows file structure. Budget Status utilizes an Oracle database.

- b. Will ND provide the interface links to these applications?

A: No interfaces exist today, so they will need to be developed by a team of vendor and State resources. Phase 1 activities include gathering requirements and designing a solution. Phase 2 will consist of the implementation of that solution.

- 6) Section 2.0.4, Current Business Requirements and Documentation
- a. Will ND provide the interface into the State's financial system?
A: No interfaces exist today, so they will need to be developed by a team of vendor and State resources. Phase 1 activities include gathering requirements and designing a solution. Phase 2 will consist of the implementation of that solution.
 - b. Other departments will need to interface with the new applications.
 Who will provide the interface to those other departments?
A: No interfaces exist today, so they will need to be developed by a team of vendor and State resources. Phase 1 activities include gathering requirements and designing a solution. Phase 2 will consist of the implementation of that solution.
 - c. What is the existing telephone message system used by the legislature?
A: A custom-built Lotus Notes application.
- 7) Is Microsoft Internet Information Services supported as a web server?
A: Yes.
- 8) Is the State planning to migrate legacy data from your current system to the new proposed one? If so, is a migration plan and cost to be submitted?
A: Some data conversion will be required during Phase 2. The migration plan and cost are expected to be part of the Phase 1 deliverables.
- 9) Does the State have a preference between Oracle and Microsoft SQL Server for the proposed system?
A: No, both are supported.
- 10) On Page 12, Bill Drafting - Rules, Number 4, the State requests the ability to print the Rules Booklet. Is the State referring to House and Senate Rules?
A: Yes, House and Senate Rules, Joint Rules, and Constitutional References.
- 11) On Page 15, Budget Status, Number 9, the State requests generation of an SPA report. Please provide clarification on a "SPA Report".
A: The SPA report is generated periodically during the session and at the end of the session and is a compilation of the SPAs up to that point in time.
- 12) On Page 16, Committee Hearings, Number 5, the State refers to a Meeting Display System. Is a Meeting Display System currently installed? If so, can the state provide specifications to the system. If not, should the proposal and cost contain information for a new Display System?
A: The current Meeting Display System is a custom-built application. It will need to be replaced with the proposed solution and cost part of Phase 1 deliverables.

- 13) On Page 17, Legislator's Desktop, Number 12, the State references "Constituent Information". Is the State requesting a Constituent database with the system. Is the State requesting the Telephone Messaging (Page 17, Telephone Messaging, Number 1) be integrated with this database? Please explain.
A: The current Constituent information available to Legislators is very limited as is the Telephone Messaging System. It is not currently clear what future requirements will be. Phase 1 activities include gathering requirements and designing a solution. Phase 2 will consist of the implementation of that solution.
- 14) On Page 17, Legislator's Desktop, Number 13, the State references a Scratch Pad. Is the State requesting a note pad for the Legislators. Please explain.
A: Each Legislator has a Scratch Pad application on their laptop that allows them to add notes to bills. They are saved and printed as needed. Phase 1 activities include gathering requirements and designing a solution. Phase 2 will consist of the implementation of that solution.
- 15) A successful drafting system would need to interact with the State's Century Code, the State website provides these documents in pdf format. Is a text version, non-pdf format, available? The RFP refers to the State not replacing Administrative Code. This appears to be separate from the Century Code. Will the proposed solution need to include a mechanism to make updates to the Century Code? Please explain.
A: Century Code is currently in an IBM BookMaster format (tag-based DCF) on the mainframe as well as PDF format for Web access. Administrative Code is currently in an XML format on a Windows Server as well as PDF format for Web access. The solution designed during Phase 1 will need to include a mechanism to make updates to the Century Code.
- 16) Can you share the entire budget for this project?
A: The budget for the entire project has not been determined at this time. A Phase 1 deliverable is an implementation budget.
- 17) Are all of the folks responsible for authoring, reviewing, approving and publishing information prepared to move to one unified platform or should we propose multiple platforms initially and steadily move to a unified single source platform?
A: A unified single source platform at one time is the goal.
- 18) Are we allowed to come to Bismarck to hold meetings with Jim Gienger, or anyone from the State of North Dakota?
A: In order to provide equal access to all vendors, no additional communication regarding this RFP or project will be allowed until after October 14, 2005.

- 19) Are the requirements listed on pages 9-19 all of the requirements that the new system will be required to support? Do we have flexibility to propose new process and technical functionality which may streamline some of these requirements?
A: Phase 1 activities include gathering requirements and designing a solution. Vendors are encouraged to recommend any business process improvements.
- 20) Do the 5 applications systems need to be fully integrated? Should they be fully integrated?
A: NDLC would like as much integration as possible. However, NDLC recognizes that interfaces between some stand-alone systems may provide the best value to the State. Phase 1 activities include gathering requirements and designing a solution.
- 21) Is the state of North Dakota open to different options pertaining to financial models? In other words can we propose more than one way for the State to pay for this project?
A: Yes.
- 22) Is the "sample contract" the one we have to use or can it be modified once the project has been awarded?
A: NDLC intends to use a contract similar to the Sample Services Contract. After final evaluation, NDLC will negotiate with the vendor determined to have made the most advantageous proposal to the State. Vendors must state any objections to the Sample Services Contract in their proposal.
- 23) Is this the last opportunity for us to communicate with the State of North Dakota until October 14th when the RFP responses are due? Can we use e-mail?
A: In order to provide equal access to all vendors, no additional communication regarding this RFP or project will be allowed until after October 14, 2005.
- 24) What kind of interface currently exists and should be required to exist for the Budget Status Application?
A: No interfaces exist today, re-keying of Budget information into the Bill Drafting System is required. It is desirable to have an interface. Phase 1 activities include gathering requirements and designing a solution. Phase 2 will consist of the implementation of that solution.
- 25) There appears to be conflicting start and end dates for Phase 1 and 2 based on timelines in section 3.01 and the contract terms in section 4.01. What are the expected Start and End dates for the Phase 1 and 2?
A: Phase 1 start date is as soon as possible (no later than January 1, 2006) and an end date no later than August 31, 2006. The Phase 1 CONTRACT will match those dates. Phase 2 start and end dates will be determined based on Phase 1 recommendations and funds available. The desire is to start Phase 2 as soon as possible near the end of Phase 1. The Phase 2 CONTRACT start date will match the Phase 2 start date. The Phase 2 CONTRACT end date will be June 30, 2007 (end of current biennium) with up to 4 years of extensions for Phase 2 completion (to be determined prior to Phase 2 startup).

26) What hardware (servers, network, storage, SAN) and software (utilities, development tools, vendor software) is provided by the state of ND versus what the vendor must supply under contract?

A: During Phase 1, NDLC will provide VPN client software, if needed. Vendors should include any additional needs and assumptions in their proposals. During Phase 2, it is anticipated the vendors will provide their own development tools and NDLC or ITD will provide the solution infrastructure (hardware, software, and network). However, Phase 2 details will be determined during Phase 1.

27) On page 4, section 1.01, the desire to replace legacy applications with Commercial Off The Shelf Software (COTS) is specified. The majority of currently available Legislative COTS typically rely (or are at least optimized), to greater or lesser degrees, on scripting or integration software not included in the Application Development Tools/Languages List on page 20. Are exceptions to that list feasible under these circumstances?

A: NDLC agrees that the solution designed during Phase 1 will likely include COTS products not currently on the list provided on page 20 of the RFP. An exception request process is in place to address this type of issue and will be used if needed.

28) On page 11, under 'Signing', is there a desire to **interface** to an existing system in the Governor's office, or the Secretary of States Office? If not, is a new system in one or both of those offices within the scope of this project? Are there other peripheral systems to which the desired new systems must electronically integrate?

A: No systems exist today in Governor's Office or the Secretary of States Office. The process today is manual. New systems in other agencies will not be within the scope of this project. Phase 1 activities include gathering requirements and designing a solution.

29) On page 11, with regard to the section on Resolving/Blending and Proofing, what is meant by "maintain" a packet?

A: "Maintain" refers to assigning and tracking packets. Packets are a grouping of 25 Bills and Resolutions.

30) Who performs the task of publishing? Is there a difference between the "Publisher" and the "State Printer", or do these terms in the RFP describe the same organization?

A: "Publisher" refers to Lexis Law Publishing and the "State Printer" refers to the State print shop and a contracted printer.

31) On page 10, it says the current system allows users to engross. Some states have found that automatic engrossment can lead to significant savings of effort, time, and money directly attributable to automation. Is engrossment in the current system considered automatic or manual? If it is manual engrossment, is automatic engrossment a desired feature in a new system?

A: The current engrossment process is a manual one. The desire is to have an automated engrossment feature as part of the new system. Phase 1 activities include gathering requirements and designing a solution.

32) On page 10, under 'Conference Committee' #2, how does the current system allow users to resolve issues? Some states have a concept of a "side-by-side" document report that aligns versions of a document by line number to depict differential content. Does the current system provide a feature like that? If not, is such a feature desirable?

A: The current process involves visual inspection of paper copies of the bill versions. Phase 1 activities include gathering requirements and designing a solution.

33) On page 10, mention is made of voting by Legislators. Does the current system include voting or is it integrated to an ancillary voting system? Is there any current integration between voting and bill status or bill tracking applications? Could you comment on any desire to develop or enhance these features in a new system?

A: The current voting system is a stand-alone system with interfaces to the bill status and calendar systems. Phase 1 activities include gathering requirements and designing a solution.

34) On page 9 (Initial Setup, bullet #2), with regard to the viewing of supporting information, what tools exist to do this? Does this involve a comprehensive comparative search, or is it a straight-forward report of other bills that amend the same cite?

A: It is a straight-forward report only.

35) On page 17 (Legislator's Desktop, bullet #17), what particular information is compared between the current session and previous sessions?

A: The number of bills passed, bills introduced, etc. through the same number of days in the previous session.

36) Do you anticipate systems available for use on the session floor at the house and senate desks and journal desks?

A: Yes.

37) Section 2.04: The RFP reads, "The scope did not include the gathering of new or future business requirements." Does NDLC expect the vendor to capture these requirements as part of Phase I performed under this RFP?

A: Yes, Phase 1 activities include gathering requirements and designing a solution.

38) Section 2.03: The RFP states, "The Budget Status application has also been rewritten recently..... It would be beneficial for the system to transfer data to the bill drafting and journal systems electronically", but Section 2.04 (Page 15) there is a section for Budget Status. Is it the Budget Status in-scope or out-of-scope for the Phase I and/or Phase II of this project?

A: The Budget Status system needs to be understood by the vendor and recommendations made as to how NDLC could better interface it with a new Bill Drafting system. It is anticipated that the Budget Status system will not need replacing at this time.

- 39)Section 2.03: Same question as previous... is the Administrative Code in-scope or out-of-scope for Phase I and Phase II?
A: For the most part, the Administrative Code system is out-of-scope. However, during Phase 1, the vendor needs to understand the technology being used and provide any recommendations regarding its use. The users that create Bill Drafts are the same ones that create the Administrative Code. It is anticipated that the Administrative Code system will not need replacing.
- 40)Section 2.05: Under the subtitle "Database Services" the RFP states, "ITD provides both test and production database environments and dedicated, or stand alone, installations of these databases are actively discouraged". Can you explain?
A: ITD supports both test and production SHARED database environments. DEDICATED database environments are actively discouraged.
- 41)Section 3.01, Tasks- Phase I: In the tasks listed, the RFP describes both a cost/benefit analysis and a Return on Investment (ROI) analysis is to be provided. Has the NDLC performed cost/benefit and ROI analysis before and if so, has specific criteria been defined that can be used in completing these two tasks?
A: No cost/benefit analysis or ROI have been done by NDLC for any IT projects in the past and no specific criteria have been identified. NDLC can provide current IT related costs and will work with the vendor to capture any other information deemed necessary.
- 42)Section 3.01, Resources - Phase 1 of the RFP, says "Vendors should describe their requirements for the NDLC resource availability." Are you asking the vendor to provide actual hours for the NDLC resources or a percentage of time they need to be available? Does the availability need to be specified by the high-level tasks defined in Phase 1?
A: NDLC wants to understand the type of resources and percentage of time they will be needed during various activities the vendors propose.
- 43)Section 4.08: Is NDLC willing to have a payment schedule that is based on monthly hours worked with a setback for completing the final deliverable or will the payment schedule be based on deliverable?
A: The payment schedule will be negotiated with the selected vendor. However, the payments will be tied to deliverables and/or milestones (which could be monthly).
- 44)Section 4.10: Will the NDLC confirm that changes to project team members will not be unreasonably withheld. Its possible that project team members who are proposed, could terminate their employment between the time the proposal is submitted and the contract is awarded. How will this be handled by NDLC?
A: NDLC understands new team members will need to be assigned to the project from time to time. NDLC will not be unreasonable in its approval on changes to the project team. The intent of Section 4.10 is to protect NDLC from a vendor proposing an "A" team, but then switching to something less.

45)Section 5.04: Can you tell us which states would be affected by North Dakota's preference laws and what the associated percentage increase would be?

***A: NDLC is not aware of any states that would be affected by North Dakota's preference laws. Please refer to the following for details:
http://www.oregon.gov/DAS/PFSS/SPO/reciprocal_detail.shtml***

46)Section 5.05: How much notice will the vendors be given prior to the time of their oral presentation, if these are required?

A: Every attempt will be made to give sufficient notice for each vendor asked to provide an oral presentation. NDLC understands vendors are very busy and scheduling on a short notice is difficult and expensive. NDLC is hopeful that oral presentations, if necessary, will occur during October, but may extend into November.

47)Section 6.04: Regarding the three references that must be provided, do these need to be references related to the entire project (Phase 1 and Phase 2) or just the Phase covered in this RFP?

A: The references should be related to the entire project.

48)Section 6.05: Is it sufficient for the vendor to provide their Dun & Bradstreet number and D&B rating or does the vendor need to include the Dun & Bradstreet Report in their proposal?

A: A Dun & Bradstreet Report is not required. Vendors should provide financial information in such a manner that a determination about the stability and financial strength of the organization can be reasonable formulated.

49)Section 6.06: A per diem rate for meals and hotels were provided in the RFP. Are these the only expenses that will be reimbursed by NDLC under this RFP? Is NDLC willing to cover all "reasonable and customary" expenses incurred by the vendor?

A: In the Cost Proposal, vendors should describe any other costs associated with the service and define the estimated costs. NDLC is willing to cover SOME "reasonable and customary" expenses, but need to know what they may be.

50)Section 7.07: Since vendors can only submit one proposal, would the NDLC allow a vendor to propose alternative solutions within one proposal?

A: Yes, vendors may submit alternative solutions. Each alternative must be clearly defined and priced in a manner that NDLC can evaluate it according to the criteria stated in the RFP.

51) Attachment 1, Item 13.a.2: Regarding Professional Liability and Errors and Omissions Insurance - our company self insures against this type of risk. Would this be acceptable if our company provided financial statements demonstrating it's sufficient financial strength to self-insure this risk?

A: The Sample Services Contract contains the insurance requirements for this project. As for the self-insurance, having a vendor simply provide financial statements that indicate financial strength is not sufficient. The State would consider a self-insurance or self-retention fund for that purpose if evidence, such as certificate of financial responsibility, can be produced showing that funds are allocated for that type of coverage.

52) Attachment 1, Item 25.j: Can the NDLC please specify which background checks will be required and how many years should these background checks cover?

A: For Phase 1, complete criminal background checks will be required for all contracted staff and subcontractors assigned to this project. For Phase 2, NDLC has not yet determined the requirement, but, at a minimum, criminal background checks will be required.

53) Attachment 1, Item 25.l: Will the NDLC confirm that a resignation/termination of personnel is an exception to this language and that the NDLC will not unreasonably withhold approval of personnel proposed as replacements?

A: NDLC understands new team members will need to be assigned to the project from time to time. NDLC will not be unreasonable in its approval on changes to the project team.

54) Attachment 1, Item 25.m: Will the vendor be prohibited from working on-site during state holidays and mandatory leave days? Will NDLC please explain/clarify the meaning of "mandatory leave days"? Also, will NDLC provide a list of the state holidays and any mandatory leave days?

A: The vendor will likely be prohibited from working onsite during state holidays (the Capitol doors would be locked). A mandatory leave day may be one called by the Governor during a blizzard, for example. NDLC will provide a list of state holidays during contract negotiations.

55) Attachment 1, Item 26.a: This sentence appears to contradict the language in Section 3.02. Please clarify which is correct for this RFP.

A: The vendor will not be required to perform all work onsite.

56) Attachment 1, Item 26.d: Can the NDLC please verify that the vendor will not be required to provide equipment and software for onsite contractor personnel?

A: During Phase 1, NDLC will provide VPN client software, if needed. Vendors should include any additional needs and assumptions in their proposals. During Phase 2, it is anticipated the vendors will provide their own development tools and NDLC or ITD will provide the solution infrastructure (hardware, software, and network). However, Phase 2 details will be determined during Phase 1.

- 57) Attachment 1, Item 27.a: Does the NDLC expect to have both a development and test platform, so that acceptance testing can be performed in a controlled environment?
A: Yes, NDLC will provide development and test environments.
- 58) Attachment 1, Item 27.c: This specifies that the STATE has the right to complete a review of any deliverable during the life of the contract. Will the NDLC clarify that this means the "for life of the contract" or until the deliverable is approved?
A: NDLC agrees to modify Item 27.c for clarification. "For the life of this contract" will be replaced with "For the life of this contract or until such time as a deliverable is accepted by the STATE".
- 59) Attachment 1, Items 29.a.2)-3): Can the NDLC clarify if these two clauses will apply to the Phase 1 project since there will be no "product" implemented during this phase under the RFP?
A: Items 29.a.2 and 29.a.3 do not apply to the Phase 1 contract.
- 60) Attachment 1, Item 34: Can the NDLC clarify how this item applies since there is not product being implemented during Phase 1 under this RFP?
A: Item 34 does not apply to the Phase 1 contract.